

REMARKS

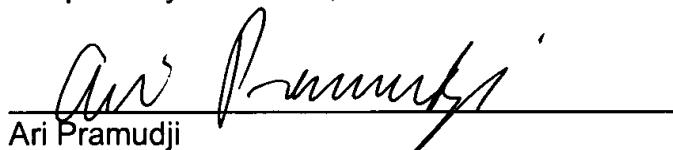
This is intended as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated January 14, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on April 14, 2004. Claims 12 and 13 have been allowed. Claims 1-11 and 14-21 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to subsequently take up prosecution of the claims as originally filed in this application in a continuation, a continuation-in-part and/or a divisional application. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

The Examiner takes the position that claims 1-6, 8-11, 14-16 and 18-21 are directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed due to the limitation "the substrate-handling robot disposed on the upper mainframe to transfer a plurality of semiconductor substrates between the semiconductor substrate processing cells" that has been added to the claims. The Examiner states that the new limitation changes the invention from a platform for class 248 to a work holder for class 269 or robots for class 901. The Examiner further states that since Applicants have received an action on the merits for the originally presented invention, this invention has been constructively elected by original presentation for prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, claims 1-6, 8-11, 14-16 and 18-21 are withdrawn by the Examiner from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the above restriction. Nevertheless, claims 1-6, 8-11, 14-16 and 18-21 have been cancelled without prejudice to put the entire case in condition for allowance.

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,


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